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BUREAUS AND SPORTSMEN COOPERATE TO SAVE WESTERN WATERFOWL

Western sportsmen are cooperating with the United States Department of Agriculture by creating a fund to be expended under the direction of the Biological Survey for the improvement of conditions affecting migratory birds, according to an announcement just issued by Secretary of Agriculture Jardine. It is planned to make a thorough investigation of the practicability and cost of constructing dikes and other control works necessary to provide adequate refuges for waterfowl in three of their important western resorts. These centers of concentration are at Lower Klamath Lake, in northern California, Malheur Lake, in east-central Oregon, and the delta of Bear River, in Great Salt Lake, Utah.

The funds thus made available by sportsmen will enable the Biological Survey to cooperate with the Bureau of Public Roads of the department in preliminary investigations. With these as a basis, measures can be taken to restore for the birds as far as possible conditions that formerly existed. Work will be undertaken at once, and the operations will seek to determine what can be done before too late to correct deplorable conditions that have arisen at these three centers of abundance of our valuable game birds.

Lower Klamath Lake was formerly a large body of water, but it has decreased so much in size by evaporation as to destroy its usefulness as a wildfowl resort. Investigations here will seek to ascertain the cost and best location of a dike, if authorized, to reflood a part of Lower Klamath, now dried up by evaporation.

Malheur Lake was once a water area of great extent but through evaporation and other changed conditions has been so reduced that the water supply is insufficient for the birds formerly attracted there. One of the engineering problems involved at Malheur is to maintain a fair-sized lake, but one that admittedly must be smaller than formerly.

The delta of Bear River, in Great Salt Lake, Utah, is a notable instance of a wild-duck resort that because of changing conditions needs special attention, including diking, to prevent alkaline waters making it a death-trap for the multitudes of birds that use it not only as a breeding ground but as a stopping place during migration. This area is of particular importance as a feeding and resting place for the waterfowl of North America. It is on the line of the spring and fall migration of hordes of ducks and other birds, traveling between Alaska and Canada south to Mexico and return, and as a breeding place it becomes a center of game supply for a dozen or more surrounding States. The construction of a dike here will result in the permanent maintenance of many thousands of acres of the finest kinds of wild-duck feeding grounds.

To maintain a sufficient supply of fresh water for ducks and other birds is the underlying purpose of the present cooperative undertaking. A continuous fresh supply is essential not only for the prevention of the already serious alkali poisoning of the ducks but also for maintaining food plants that have heretofore been destroyed by the influx of salt and alkaline waters. The cost, kind, and location of dike construction and other improvements needed to maintain the water supply will be studied at once, as this will furnish the data needed as a basis for corrective legislation. The interest of sportsmen in the matter is shown by their raising the funds needed for the preliminary work.

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